

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 6052

EXDIS

EO 11652GDS
TAGS: US, PL, PINT, PGOV, EAGR, EAD
SUBJ: THE POLISH INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE END OF AUGUST
1977

1. SUMMARY: WE HAVE BEEN HEARING RUMORS TO THE EFFECT THAT
IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP ARE IMMINENT.
PROSPECTS THAT JAROSZEWICZ WILL BE EASED OUT OR KICKED UPSTAIRS
CONTINUE TO BE DISCUSSED -- AS THEY HAVE BEEN FOR SEVERAL
YEARS -- AND EVEN GIEREK IS NOW SEEN AS VULNERABLE BY WARSAW
RUMORMONGERS. JAROSZEWICZ MAY LOSE HIS POSITION AT SOME
POINT; THE QUESTION IS WHEN. AS FOR GIEREK, WITH ALL HIS
TROUBLES, THE FIRST SECRETARY STILL CONFRONTS NO SERIOUS CONTENDER
FOR HIS JOB. HE AND HIS POLICIES WILL BE SEVERELY TESTED,
HOWEVER, AND WE OUGHT TO ASK OURSELVES HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR
U.S. INTERESTS THAT HE AND HIS MODERATE COLLEAGUES RE-
MAIN IN CHARGE. END SUMMARY.

2. I BEGIN THREE WEEKS OF LEAVE TOMORROW. IT MAY BE USEFUL
TO SET DOWN SOME COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE
IN POLAND AND ON POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS, PART-
ICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE RECENT SPATE OF RUMORS ABOUT
CHANGES IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP. SOME OF THESE WILL UN-
DOUBTEDLY SURFACE IN THE WEST, AS POLES VISIT THEIR
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RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA
AND MEMBERS OF POLONIA RETURN TO THE WEST FROM VISITS TO
POLAND.

3. THE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT THE NEW CROP OF RUMORS
IS THE FREQUENCY OF SUGGESTIONS THAT GIEREK MAY BE RE-
PLACED. INCREASINGLY, THE SUGGESTION IS HEARD THAT

OLSZOWSKI, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT MOVE UP. OF COURSE, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE -- AS THE WARSAW CAFE WITS SAY -- IN A COUNTRY WHERE THEY EXACT A TAX FOR BREATHING FRESH AIR (AS, IN FACT, THEY DO IN HOTELS IN THE BALTIC COASTAL CITIES). JUDGING BY ALL THE USUAL CRITERIA, IT IS AS HARD NOW TO ACCEPT THIS AS A REAL POSSIBILITY AS IT WAS EARLIER. GIEREK'S MEETING WITH BREZHNEV APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FULLY CONSISTENT WITH THE VIEW THAT HIS POSITION IS NO WEAKER NOW THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN THE PAST TEN MONTHS, IE, SINCE HE PARTIALLY RECOVERED HIS EQUILIBRIUM FOLLOWING THE JUNE 1976, EVENTS. IN HIS MEETING WITH SENATOR MCGOVERN, HE WAS RELAXED AND EXUDED SELF-CONFIDENCE. HE GIVES NO SIGN OF BEING UNDER HEAVIER FIRE NOW FROM WITHIN THE PARTY.

4. RUMORS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF OLSZOWSKI'S MOVING UP TO REPLACE JAROSZEWICZ, PERHAPS AT THE TIME OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR OR THE BEGINNING OF NEXT, ARE ALSO CURRENT AND ARE EASIER TO CREDIT. MY ONLY DOUBT ARISES FROM THE FACT THAT, EVER SINCE I ARRIVED HERE, OVER FOUR-AND-A-HALF YEARS AGO, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT JAROSZEWICZ'S LEAVING THE PREMIERSHIP, AND HE IS STILL THERE. OF COURSE, SOONER OR LATER, THIS RUMOR WILL BECOME A REALITY. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER, BUT WHEN. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION -- AS CONTRASTED WITH RUMORS, HYPOTHESES, AND SPECULATION, OF CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH WE HAVE A GREAT ABUNDANCE -- WHICH WOULD SUPPORT A FIRM PREDICTION THAT THIS EMINENTLY SENSIBLE AND LONG OVERDUE MOVE WILL BE MADE IN DECEMBER OR JANUARY. JABLONSKI WANTS TO LEAVE THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND JAROSZEWICZ HAS FULLY EARNED A PROMOTION TO THIS PRIMARILY CEREMONIAL ROLE BY HIS ECONOMIC POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR THE ABORTIVE PRICE RISE OF JUNE 1976.

5. BEHIND THE RUMORS OF GIEREK'S VULNERABILITY IS A VERY CONVINCING LINE OF REASONING. A) THE FOOD SITUATION WAS BAD EVEN BEFORE THE FLOODS OF AUGUST. B) BECAUSE OF THE FLOODS, IT IS NOW MUCH WORSE. THE WORD BEING USED IS "DISASTER" (KLESKA). C) IF THE REGIME IS UNABLE TO GET THE GRAIN AND FEEDSTUFFS IT NEEDS TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT GROWTH IN LIVESTOCK NUMBERS, PARTICULARLY PIGS, THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WILL SURELY BE HEARD FROM AGAIN, PROBABLY THIS WINTER, WITH RESULTS WHICH NO ONE CAN ACCURATELY PREDICT. D) AT THE SAME TIME, IF THE GOVERNMENT IS FORCED TO REDUCE NEW INVESTMENT SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THE 24-25 PERCENT LEVEL INVISAGED IN CURRRNT PLANS, THE STAGNATION IN POLAND'S ECONOMIC GROWTH THUS INDUCED IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO A DOWNWARD SPIRAL, IN-

VOLVING FURTHER SHORTFALLS IN THE PROMISED SUPPLIES OF CONSUMER DURABLES AND NEW HOUSING (THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHICH IS ALREADY SERIOUSLY BELOW THE PLAN). THIS WILL INTENSIFY WORKER DISCONTENT AND, LIKE THE MEAT SHORTAGE, COULD LEAD TO PUBLIC PROTESTS, WITH EQUALLY UNFORESEEABLE POTENTIAL RESULTS. E) THE MAINTENANCE OF GIEREK'S LINE, CENTERING AS IT DOES ON THE "OPENING TO THE WEST," IS DEPENDENT UPON A CONTINUING GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF PIGS AND THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY. IF GIEREK IS UNABLE TO SOLVE THIS DOUBLE PROBLEM, HE WILL HAVE TO GO.

6. THAT IS THE RATIONALE ADVANCED BY THE MORE RESPONSIBLE RUMORMONGERS. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL IN IT. IT LACKS CONFIDENTIAL

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ONLY ONE THING: A CONVINCING EXPLANATION OF WHO MIGHT REPLACE GIEREK. SHORT OF A RECURRENCE OF THE SORT OF SITUATION WHICH AROSE IN OCTOBER, 1956, IT IS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO INVISAGE THE RETURN OF SZLACHCIC FROM THE POLITICAL GRAFEYARD. THOSE WHO SPEAK OF SZYDLAK HAVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 WARSAW 6052

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NO ANSWER WHEN IT IS OBJECTED THAT THE ASSUMPTION OF THE FIRST SECRETARYSHIP BY A MAN WHO SERVED IN THE LUFTWAFFE IN WORLD WAR II SEEMS UNLIKELY, TO SAY THE LEAST. JAROSZEWICZ IS REGARDED SOLELY AS MOVING IN ONE DIREC-

TION: OUT (ALTHOUGH THE ULTIMATE EXIT MAY BE PRECEDED BY A PERIOD OF APPARENT UPWARD MOVEMENT, TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE). IT WAS RUMORED LAST YEAR THAT GIEREK WOULD BRING GENERAL ZDZISLAW GRUDZIEN UP FROM KATOWICE TO GROOM HIM FOR GREATER THEINS IN THE CENTRAL APPARATUS, BUT THAT DID NOT HAPPEN, AND NO ONE THINKS, THAT, ON HIS OWN, GRUDZIEN COULD REPEAT THE MOVE MADE IN DECEMBER, 1970, BY HIS MENTOR. ERGO, OLSZOWSKI IS THE ONLY ONE LEFT WITH ENOUGH POLITICAL STATUS TO BE MENTIONED AS A POSSIBLE FIRST SECRETARY. BUT IT IS HARD TO SEE IN OLSZOWSKI THE KIND OF PUBLIC PERSONALITY THAT, IN SOME MEASURE, IS NEEDED IN A MAN CALLED UPON TO FILL THE ROLE OF FIRST SECRETARY IN POLAND. WHAT IS MORE, OLSZOWSKI WOULD ALSO BE HELD PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION, SINCE, AFTER ALL, HE WAS PUT INTO HIS PRESENT POSITION TO IMPLEMENT GIEREK'S RECOVERY PROGRAM.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS MAY FORCE THE REPLACEMENT OF GIEREK, PERHAPS NOT BY ONE INDIVIDUAL, BUT BY A DUUMVIR.
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RATE OR TRIUMVIRATE. IT IS HARD FOR US HERE TO SEE THIS HAPPENING, HOWEVER, UNTIL IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT GIEREK CANNOT FIND PARTIAL SOLUTIONS TO THE FOOD AND INVESTMENT (READ: DEBT) PROBLEMS. SO LONG AS HE CAN MUDDLE THROUGH AND AVOID NEW, GROSS BLUNDERS, LIKE THAT OF LAST JUNE, HE CAN PROBABLY HOLD HIS JOB. BUT THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WILL BE CRITICAL FOR HIM.

8. WHAT IS CLEAR IN ALL THIS IS THE DESPERATE NEED OF GIEREK, OF THE LEADERSHIP AS NOW CONSTITUTED, AND OF THE POLISH ECONOMY, FOR THE KIND OF RELIEF FOR WHICH GIEREK IS ASKING THE U.S.: GRAIN AND FEEDSTUFFS ON TERMS WHICH INVOLVE A DELAY IN REPAYMENT UNTIL 1980.

9. THAT RAISES AGAIN THE QUESTION WHETHER IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO TRY TO HELP KEEP GIEREK IN PLACE. BUT THAT MAY BE THE WRONG QUESTION TO ASK. WE NEED TO ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THREE, MORE PRECISE, CONSIDERATIONS. (A) ARE WE PREPARED TO PROVIDE THE REQUESTED HELP IN THE HOPE OF WARDING OFF A DETERIORATION OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO SERIOUS POPULAR DISTURBANCES, THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF WHICH WE CANNOT FORESEE? (B) IS IT WORTH OUR WHILE TO TRY TO KEEP POLAND MOVING IN A DIRECTION WHICH WILL ENABLE IT TO MAINTAIN THE "OPENING TO THE WEST"? (C) FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE U.S. INTEREST, WOULD THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT OF EXTENDING EASIER CREDIT TERMS FOR GRAIN AND FEEDSTUFFS TO POLAND BE A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE ONE IN THE REST OF EASTERN

EUROPE, INCLUDING THE USSR? THIS LAST QUESTION CAN BE
POSED IN ANOTHER FORM: WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN
POLAND AND THE OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IF
THE MODERATES IN WARSAW DO NOT PREVAIL?

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10. I BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER TO C, SO FAR AS POLAND IS
CONCERNED WOULD BE IDENTICAL WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE
AUGUST FLOODS: DISASTROUS.
DAVIES

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